



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer-
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

At its meeting held February 24, 2009, the Board took the following action:

14

The following statement was entered into the record for Supervisor Yaroslavsky:

“During the tumultuous decade in U.S. history leading up to the Civil War, the City of Los Angeles, with a population just over 4,000 residents, was home to about 60 African Americans. The constitution of the new State of California had banned slavery, and black men and women – many having fled the Southern states in search of freedom and opportunity in the American West – were able to work and own property, and developed what became a vibrant black community in Los Angeles.

“John Ballard was one these pioneers. In 1859 he married his wife Amanda and settled in Los Angeles. According to the 1860 census, he was employed as a teamster, driving horse-drawn wagons filled with goods. By 1869, he had become active in civic affairs. Along with six others, he founded the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, purchasing the property for \$1,860, as recorded in a deed dated March 13, 1869.

“By 1870, John and Amanda were the parents of seven children, but in 1871, tragically, Amanda died in childbirth. John later remarried a woman named Francis. In 1880, the Ballards decided to relocate out of the city. By then, the population of Los Angeles had soared, and with this influx of new residents from the East and Midwest, the political and social climate was changing. Historians speculate that the Ballards may have been responding to growing segregationist policies and attitudes many thought they had safely left behind in the South.

“The Ballard family made their new home in the Santa Monica Mountains near Seminole Hot Springs, and John remained there after the death of Francis in 1896. John and his daughter Alice filed homestead applications, and in 1900 each received 160 acres of land, including the property near Seminole Hot Springs. Not long after, John Ballard passed away at Los Angeles County Hospital, and was buried at Rosedale Cemetery.

(Continued on Page 2)

14 (Continued)

“The highest peak in the vicinity of Seminole Hot Springs, more than 2,000 feet above sea level, is named Negrohead Mountain. A considerable body of historical and cartographic evidence suggests this was in recognition of the Ballard homestead. At this time, noting the civic contributions made by John Ballard and his family, it is only fitting in honor of Black History Month, 2009 that we initiate this effort to rename the mountain peak Ballard Mountain in their honor.”

Therefore, on motion of Supervisor Yaroslavsky, seconded by Supervisor Antonovich, unanimously carried, the Executive Officer of the Board was instructed to send a five-signature letter to the United States Board on Geographic Names, U.S. Geological Survey, to rename Negrohead Mountain as Ballard Mountain, as a lasting tribute to the pioneering spirit and civic contributions of this courageous African-American man and his family to the political and cultural vibrancy of his community in the formative years of Los Angeles City's growth and development.

r:\final documents\communications and letters\year 2009\022409\09022409_14.doc

Copies distributed:

- Each Supervisor
- Chief Executive Officer
- County Counsel

Letter sent to:

- Chairman, United States Board on Geographic Names,
- United States Geographical Survey